

WOMEN IN NUMISMATICS

winning ways

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President's Corner

By Lorraine S. Weiss

Throughout my travels on the show circuit across this great country, I have been so fortunate to meet many terrific and influential women in numismatics. With your indulgence, I would like to bring to you a few of these luminaries in each column. In doing so, my goal is to show present and potential members that virtually anywhere you reside, there are women nearby who are involved in a wide variety of numismatic endeavors; collecting, exhibiting, writing, selling, etc.

The Southern circuit is alive with such women. Dot Hendrick is one of them. She has been a fixture in North Carolina numismatics for more years than she likes to admit. This delightful lady not only operates her own coin business, she periodically produces privately run, small, friendly coin shows in Raleigh and Charlotte, in addition to serving on the board of directors of NCNA. Mary Brewer has been presented with the NCNA's prestigious John Pittman Award as Numismatist of the Year for outstanding service, not only to the board of directors, but to local coin clubs as well. Her numismatic interest is Kennedy Half Dollars.

Kathy Sellers-Topia is a partner in Carolina Coin LLC. The company enjoyed over

30 years of success at their store in Columbia, South Carolina before re-focusing to buy and sell a variety of US coins on the internet and at regional shows. Also on the internet is newcomer Suzanne Stewart, VA Coins out of Virginia.

Not to be outdone, the Midwest has more than its share of numismatic women. Phyllis Weis (one "s", no relation) of Wisconsin has been collecting cents, nickels, dimes, and quarters since 1963. She assists the South Shore Coin Club in any capacity she is needed and is known for providing her famous homemade baked goodies for the dealers at their annual show in Milwaukee. Betty Wassel is the "Betty"



of Betty's Coins, also out of Wisconsin. Of special interest to her is the historical aspect of early US coins. Although it was her husband and partner who first exposed her to numismatics, she credits WIN founding member Mary Sauvain as her role model. Although her husband prefers the buying aspect of the business, Betty enjoys the interaction with the public. Her private collection of Proof 64 Red Indian Cents was her numismatic "pride & joy". It was sold to finance law school for her daughter, her personal "pride & joy".

In the early years when numismatic women were scarce in the Midwest, Julie Boike was a trailblazer. She began in 1972 as a part-timer and ran her shop from 1979-81. A specialist in general US and Canadian coins, she now prefers regional coin shows. In speaking with potential women collectors, she found that they are sometimes intimidated by the perceived trickiness of the grading process. In her opinion, education is the key to getting more women involved in numismatics. As Julie, also from Minnesota is Mary Jo Gurney of Gurney's Coins, specializing in estate sales.

Turning our sights to the West, we meet Aloma Blaylock of Utah. Her impressive numismatic credentials include First Place award for her exhibit "Women on Coins". She has been co-chair and exhibit chair for the ANA in 1985 and 2001, committee member for ANA National Coin Week, as well as President & Secretary-Treasurer of UNS. Since 1962, she has been involved with many numismatic educational programs including bringing the Utah Bicentennial Exhibit to regional schools.

My first article on numismatic luminaries could not be written without a tribute to Sondra Beymer of California. One of the founders of WIN, she was on our first board of directors, and served us well as Past President. WIN is indebted to her for her vision and continued support, as I am for her encouragement.

To all WIN members, please remember, that when we meet others for the first time who express an interest in numismatics, to tell them about WIN. You will be delightfully surprised, as I have, at their positive reaction.

Lorraine

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Letters-to-the-Editor are welcome from both members and non-members and must include your name, address and phone number. Letters will be published in *Winning Ways* as space and publication deadlines permit and are subject to editorial discretion. Whenever a letter addresses a specific problem that the Board can assist in resolving, it will be forwarded to the appropriate people.

Feature Articles

Articles, photos and features pertaining to the numismatic industry are welcome and are subject to editorial discretion and editing.

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Deadlines

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The Piano Players

By James Antonio

He had three-hundred shiny new ones but he hadn't figured out how to do it. The plan had become an obsession for Geoffrey Grey. This pleasant September afternoon he was standing in a vast field of potato plants that undulated away in every direction for almost as far as he could see. The workers were harvesting attentively with their spades, trying not to score the potatoes. It was finicky and back-breaking and Geoffrey's face was glistening with sweat in the glare of the bright sun. He'd managed to nudge the obsession into a corner of his mind and, with dreamy blue eyes, he gazed across the long, straight rows of tawny plants to the sparkling waters of New London Bay. He loved Prince Edward Island. Sometimes he'd stroll along the beach and watch the broken waves skittering up onto the sand in lacy froths. Or he'd marvel at the sandstone cliffs which, in the late evening, often glowed a fiery red like giant live coals. During quieter moments he thought mostly about his daughter. Georgina loved music and she wanted to play the piano. Her love for it had all come about after a visit to the Wedding Cake House on a cold, snowy night.

Pauline McGeown, sixty years old and very good for her age, was tapping out song after song on the grand piano, a great gleaming piece of work in black ebony. Right beside her, on a footstool done in lavender and silver brocade, sat Georgina Grey, who was eight. The girl's big brown eyes seemed about to pop out of her head as she listened to the compositions of Liszt, Donizetti, Mozart, Verdi, and others. She usually had a habit of flicking back her long, wavy red hair but she was so absorbed in watching Mrs. McGeown play that not once did she so much as flinch. She was like a statue in the brightly lit ballroom. Oh, she told herself, how I

want to play the piano! "Daddy, daddy," she'd say in her wheedling way, "I do so want to play like Mrs. McGeown! We must get a piano, we must!"

While the impromptu recital was going on, Geoffrey Grey had been with Lachlan McGeown, the proprietor of the potato plantation that took up so much of the reddish violet land near Cavendish. At the far end of the room Lachlan was showing him his coin collection. It was where Geoffrey had gotten the idea. He still couldn't believe what he'd seen that night, so many coins from years gone by, and the most unbelievable thing of all was that, except for a few, they'd

while Mr. McGeown was placing them carefully back in the velvet trays that slid into the lovely mahogany cabinet. He also remembered the man's words: "One day, young man, these coins will be worth a lot of money."

"The wagon's broke, Mr. Grey! The wagon's broke! Come, please!"

The urgent call brought Geoffrey back to the present, to the busy potato field. They always called him when any of the equipment broke down. He was a carpenter and to fix things was his job. He looked yonder, placing his large bony hand under the brim of his hat to shield his eyes from the sun. He was tall and thin, twenty-seven, with a gaunt, analytical face, his leanness hardly indicative of a surprising physical strength.

He dropped his spade and set off across the rows of plants, dodging the clusters of potatoes lying about like strange eggs on the ruffled ground. He told himself coolly, "The wagon's bin overloaded with those that've been dug this mornin' and've dried already in the sun." He wasn't upset, having come to expect these things. He liked solving problems and, on his way to the crippled wagon, whistled a tune he'd heard his daughter playing on the grand piano. It was called the Canadian Boat Song and he smiled with a glint of satisfaction at the thought that his dear little Georgina had come so far. A whole song and with no sheet of music to look upon either! Mrs. McGeown was a very good teacher.

One night late, Mr. McGeown was standing in front of a window in an upper bedroom of the Wedding Cake House gazing out at the darkness and wondering about the future, particularly whether or not the great potato farm would flourish. At sixty-two, he'd been around for a while and he knew only too well that fail-



all been brand new. There'd been some from the United States in copper and silver, and even gold ones from dollars to twenty-dollar pieces. There'd been foreign coins too, from across the ocean, but he'd seen mostly Canadian. They were Lachlan McGeown's specialty. Why, his employer had new sets of 1858 coins from the large one-cent to the twenty-cent piece, in special black cases; sets of Canada's 1870 coins too; and great numbers of pre-Confederation tokens, bright and red as a new kettle. Geoffrey remembered commenting on the beauty of New Brunswick's silver coins—the five-, ten-, and twenty-cent pieces—

ure could happen; goodness, he'd seen it before more than once. Prosperity was some-times so short-lived; it depended on many things, especially weather in the business of agriculture. His sons Denzil and Derek would be here sure enough, he mused, and they'd just have to look out for themselves. He'd done his part, setting them up as he had.

Lachlan McGeown was a big man, quite a contrast to his right-hand troubleshooter and master of all trades, Geoffrey Grey. He was now thinking about him as he turned away from the window and walked heavily across the shiny hardwood floor to the armchair on the other side of the fireplace. He let himself fall into it with a grunt and then sat there a while watching the burning and glowing red logs in the grate as they hissed and crackled like mad little devils. It had been chilly at night for a few weeks and a good fire was certainly in order. A small oil lamp on a table at the opposite end of the room trembled erratically, pitching nervous dancing shadows on the walls. Lachlan felt a sudden hankering for a good cigar. He got to his feet and lumbered over to the drop leaf desk. He took a cigar out of the humidor and lit it with a wooden match.

Slouched like a sack of potatoes in the chair and with smoke clouding over his balding head, Lachlan found himself awestruck by the great orange cone of light that the fireplace was sending forth into the room, much reminding him of the presence of God. He stretched out his legs and saw how his black boots were shining in the almost supernatural light. Being given lately to pondering his own mortality, he was a trifle uneasy in the eerie setting. He went to church each and every Sunday (unless he was down with gout) and he believed in God and wanted to do all he could while he was here to please the Almighty. He certainly did want a place 'Up There' and, as he sat in the great chair reflecting on his life, he told himself he was going to do more for others, be kinder, smile more and scowl less, and be as generous as he could. Georgina Grey came to mind and, as soon as possible (which for Lachlan meant instantly) he was going to put an addendum on his will so that the pretty little girl would inherit the Chickering grand piano.

After lunch a couple of days later Geoffrey Grey jumped up on his horse, Oliver, and galloped down through the meadow to his little house beside the pond. He tied the horse off at the post and went over and stood for a moment at the front door. He watched the dairy cows grazing in the meadow against the backdrop of the lovely blue sky, where three perfectly white clouds were floating along like cotton in the soft breeze. He had a good life and he knew it. Smiling contentedly, he turned his back on the idyllic setting and went inside. He slipped into the storage room off the kitchen and pulled open one of the drawers in the commode, laying his hands right on the wrench. He took it out and closed the drawer and, with a skeleton key, unlocked another. He drew it open eagerly and saw the sack sitting there like a big teardrop. That's where the coins were, the ones he was going to...

As his horse Oliver trudged back up through the quiet meadow by the grazing, reddish-brown Jerseys, Geoffrey wondered how on earth he was ever going to carry out what he had in mind.

It was his wife Pauline who found him. When the small woman with the ruddy face and the turned-up button nose bustled into the room in her pink Petersham dress, she thought he was asleep in the chair. She called his name once, twice, and then a third time, and finally scurried across the floor clasping her dress and nudged him by the shoulder.

"Lachlan! Lachlan! Please, do wake up. Your dinner is out."

He didn't respond and, as the flames in the fire-place flared up bright with a gust of downdraft, she suddenly noticed that his face was a deathly gray. She gasped in horror. Lowering her ear to listen at his chest, she found that all was still.

On a snowy afternoon ten days before Christmas in 1875, Lachlan McGeown, proprietor of one of the largest potato farms in all of Prince Edward Island, was buried with just the right measure of pomp in a small churchyard beneath tall, sighing evergreens. Pauline, his

wife, affected deeply, cried and trembled to no end, her eyes like fading wet stars. She kept saying she didn't know how she was going to go on, more to herself than anyone else. There were arms to console her and whispered sympathies and, as the pine box was lowered into the ground, a violin whined pitifully.

The sons, Denzil and Derek, became the managers of the potato plantation. In, their forties, married with children, they lived not far away from the Wedding Cake House, in nice big houses of their own. They were almost never out of earshot of their mother, who, depressed and withdrawn, seemed unable to do much on her own, summoning them even to take care of simple things. Denzil was the oldest and took after his mother. Though considerably taller, he had her ruddy complexion and her turned-up nose. He was kind and caring and always willing to lend a hand. One evening, in the middle of a splendid dinner of lamb chops and creamy scalloped potatoes, he got right up and went with his mother over to the Wedding Cake House to put one of her anxieties to rest. She'd been complaining about hearing noises in the basement and thought there might be someone down there.

Derek was younger than Denzil by about three years and neither resembled the other. Derek was pretty well the image of his father, a big, stocky young man with a plump face and a grizzly reddish beard. He was impetuous and quick-tempered and didn't mince words in his gruff, boisterous way of letting everyone know that he didn't approve of Geoffrey Grey inheriting the wonderful, black ebony grand piano. He argued that his daughter Jenny liked to play the piano, she was going to be a somebody in the music world, and needed that Chickering, that was all there was to it.

"By God," he'd bark, "she's Lachlan's granddaughter! Don't ya all think she deserves it?"

One afternoon about 4:00, certain everybody was busy getting the cows back to the barn, Derek ventured down the sloping meadow in his new buckboard. It wasn't the first time. He was waiting for the right opportunity and he knew that Georgia and Geoffrey were back in one of the barns. It was Georgia who always

seemed to be around. Today, however, there appeared to be no one home. He could hear the playful cries and laughter of children outdoors and, across the shallow pond at the back of the house and on through the woods where the trees were bare, he saw swatches of clothing. He slipped inside and his wild eyes fixed right away on the piano that he could still see his mother playing; it was as shiny as ever.

"This should be ours!" he raged, storming on over. "My daughter's! Jenny's! It don't belong here! It don't look right! Why, it takes up the whole blasted room o' this miserable place!"

It had been a gruelling day and, when Georgina literally ran into them at the top of the meadow and sobbingly related her story with her long, wavy red hair dishevelled and her big brown eyes red and tearful, it was about all Georgia and Geoffrey could bear.

"Someone's ruined it!" she wailed, wrenching her hands in the folds of her dress. "It is all in pieces! The lovely piano is all in pieces!"

To the Greys, finding the Chickering in such a wretched state was nothing short of a tragedy and they were absolutely brokenhearted. It had played such a large part in the life of Mr. McGeown, their kind and benevolent employer, and more recently had become the love of their musical daughter Georgina. Two of the legs were snapped off and the piano was leaning precariously on the floor like some poor, broken-down horse; the canopy had been torn off and chopped in three; one side had been cut into, probably with an axe, leaving a great gaping gash; and, saddest of all, the ivory keys and their black cohorts were lying about on the floor like broken sticks.

There was an immediate investigation, with everyone suspecting who the culprit was. The policeman was a warm, understanding young man from Cavendish with fluffy blond

hair and a neat handlebar moustache. He came over one evening rather late to pay the Greys a visit and sat there by the wrecked piano in the flickering candlelight pretty much telling them there wasn't much hope of bringing to justice whoever had perpetrated the horrible deed.

"No," he said lamentably, looking at them with his bold, confident eyes, "I don't think we have any real proof, that's what we need. We have our suspicions surely enough but that won't do. You may be right when you say it was Derek McGeown who did it."



thing. He has motive after all but no one actually saw him wielding the weapon and hacking away at the piano. No one even saw him enter the house. He claims he was out in the field at the time and, though no one can verify it, no one can prove he's lying either."

Geoffrey suddenly perked up with new life. "Sir," he said with a smile, "I'm goin' tuh put that there piano all back tuhgether agin. It'll be just as good as new, it will. Soon you'll be ridin' by and hearin' Georgina's sweet-soundin' notes."

All through the days that followed, even in his bed at night, Geoffrey Grey was busy mentally piecing the piano back together. Before he actually began reconstructing it, he wanted to be sure he knew exactly what went where and so on. One evening, in the glow of an oil lamp, he opened the goatskin sack and took out one of the 1871 Prince Edward Island large cents. Like a fiery red jewel it was truly a work of art. On one side was a portrait of Queen Victoria and, on the other, a large oak tree, stark against the horizon. Geoffrey wondered if the three-hundred he had, all of them new as the day they'd been made, would ever be worth much more than a cent each. And then like a bolt of lightning it struck him. Certainly! That was it! Why hadn't he thought of it sooner?

Life was more difficult around the potato farm. Derek began taking out his frustrations on the employees, particularly on the Greys, about whose work he was most critical. He complained for one thing that Geoffrey let the field workers off too easily and they were becoming "shiftless", that a half-hour for lunch was "too long indeed".

"It's not right, no," Geoffrey would glower, "him pickin' on us so. Lachlan'd never've stood for it. The son is nowhere near like what the papa was."

But the Greys managed to make the best of things. Though they had no piano, they sang tunes in the evening while Georgina tapped away at an imaginary keyboard. Family life was good, they were warm enough in winter, and never lacked for food in their cozy little house at the bottom of the meadow. Night after night, Geoffrey kept working away at the piano. Next to his family, rebuilding the Chickering became his number one priority. It was a project of love even if it did mean missing strolls in the woods Sunday afternoons or along the seashore at sunset.

Finally, on a Saturday afternoon in

July of 1879, just a month before Georgina's seventeenth birthday, the Chickering grand piano was back together again.

Geoffrey paid the piano tuner, who'd come all the way from Charlottetown, and as the Grey family watched him climb up into his buggy to leave, he shook his head and rubbed his chin, and then he smiled reassuringly.

"It's pretty good," he said. "It looks like new. Georgina there'll be glad it's all done. It's just a bit disconcerting to me that I couldn't get it sounding just right. It's close though, but it's not perfect. It's the best I can do." He shook his head again, looking befuddled. "Maybe it's just me getting older and not hearing so well....The other thing is: it was all broken up. The ebony in that Chickering though sure makes up for what was lost. It's still got lovely sonority and balance.... Well, I must be going and thank-you very much for your generous stipend."

The Greys all wished him a safe trip back and then watched as his old marbled horse pulled the dilapidated buggy rattling up through the meadow at a snail's pace, the spoked wheels squeaking like lonely mice. Within minutes, Georgina was seated at the keyboard tapping out a gay tune reminiscent of a summer day at the carnival. Georgia and Geoffrey looked on with immense satisfaction while the afternoon sunlight fell across the floor in golden beams.

Geoffrey Grey died in 1910 of pneumonia, his friends and heirs blaming the death on the many hours he'd spent in the wet potato fields in the days previous. He was so popular that people came from as far away as Charlottetown to attend the funeral. He'd taken a secret to his grave. The only thing his wife knew was that no one in the family was ever supposed to sell the Chickering grand piano—an heirloom for ages to come.

"It's my wish that the Chickering

grand piano stays on in the Grey family forever," his will specified, "and that none of you is ever to sell it; it's a great gift to be passin' down, especially since it can make us all smile when someone's playin' on it like Georgina."

A lovely young woman in her early thirties was sitting at the keyboard of what appeared to be a brand new black ebony Chickering grand piano. In the floodlights washing down on the stage from high above, her long

Prelude itself, convinced that there was something not quite right with the Chickering. He made his living repairing and tuning pianos and sold them too in a spacious and warm showroom on Rue De La Gauchetiere, with an adjoining, high-tech 'atelier'.

Guiscard was in his mid-sixties, a thin wisp of a man with a disheveled head of longish salt and pepper hair. He had intense, small blue eyes and long, piano playing fingers. He was definitely a lover of music, particularly piano, and he was knowledgeable enough about the instrument that he believed he could take one apart and put it back together again blindfolded—and that it would certainly sound fine afterwards too! He had become known in the music world as Doctor Piano.

He was sitting in his chair now, fidgeting, feeling badly for the young woman who was playing, thinking how she was being cheated out of a higher quality rendition through no fault of her own. They ought to have called me, he told himself, and I would have tuned that piano perfectly. He was going to see her manager at the end of the evening and correct things before the next concert. He was so bothered by the imperfect sonority of the Chickering that it was all he could do to sit there without jumping up and storming the stage like some madman in a wrinkled suit.

Guiscard, showing a business card, had little trouble getting a tête-à-tête with Ms. Smithfield. The people were gone and the concert hall was empty and she stepped into the cozy lounge backstage looking as fresh as a rosebud. She was wearing a two-tone crepe dress in black and white and she extended her hand to welcome her guest.

"I'm concerned about your piano," Guiscard said. "There is something amiss.... Don't get me wrong: you played beautifully. But I can make your music sound better—if you let me check that piano for you."



wavy red hair had the bright sheen of brushed copper. Her name was Abbey Smithfield and she was the great-great-granddaughter of Geoffrey Grey. She was playing Chopin's Prelude in D flat major. Opus 28, Number 15—'Raindrop Prelude'. Almost all of the people in the concert hall in downtown Montreal were intent on listening to what is, for the most part, a soft, tinkling lullaby scored with a smidgeon of authoritativeness. They were spellbound and convinced the piece couldn't be played any better by anyone. But there was a man in the audience that evening by the name of Guiscard Breton and he was listening more to the piano than to the

"I just had it tuned," Abbey remonstrated, hardly believing her ears. If She hadn't known better, she would have thought it was a scam to get work. "Can you look at it before tomorrow night? I do need it. I only play on that piano; it's been in the family for generations."

"You'll have it," Guiscard promised, "even if I have to work all of tonight."

"You believe there is something wrong with it then?"

"Most certainly."

"Please do it for me then, would you?"

The next afternoon towards three o'clock, with the rain pelting down on the roof of the concert hall, though inaudible within, Guiscard rushed across the stage when he saw Ms. Abbey Smithfield. He had a wood box in his smudgy hands and he was holding it up like some kind of offering to a god.

"What on earth is that?" Ms. Smithfield wanted to know.

"I have no idea," replied Guiscard. "I found it in your piano, up against one of the walls. It's heavy enough, that's for sure." He shook it but all was quiet. "It's cheap wood, well enough made—and look here! The nails, they're rusty. It's been in there a while and it would sure explain why your piano didn't replicate your wonderful performance."

Abbey took the little box from the tuner's trembling hands.

"I didn't open it," he said. "It wouldn't be right. It's yours. There's certainly something inside."

Abbey didn't know what to make of it. It was indeed peculiar, this compact, heavy thing hidden in her piano. Where on earth had it come from? She was dumbfounded.

"Could you open it for me, Mr. Breton?"

Guiscard brought back a small screwdriver and a neat little hammer, and went to work on the floor of the stage.

In a few minutes, the mystery was

revealed. Abbey couldn't believe her eyes and Guiscard said it was a story to beat all stories. Coins, hundreds of them, all brand new—and from more than a century ago! They were copper one-cent pieces, apparently all the same, dated 1871 and from Prince Edward Island. They were still shiny and red, practically like the day they were made. As Abbey crouched there on the stage, delicately working her way through them, she saw that some were a little spotted while others had brownish splotches. They'd been in rolls, wrapped snugly in some sort of thin, oily leather. She left the sixth and final roll unopened.

"The edges are slippery," she said, looking up at a still-stunned Guiscard Breton. "Whoever put these coins into rolls put them in my piano with a view to preservation, soaking the wrappers in some kind of oil."

"It looks like it worked!" Guiscard exclaimed. "I would sure like to know the whole story."

Two days later, Abbey phoned Mr. Breton and told him everything. She'd been to a coin store and—oh yes!—the one-cent coins were valuable alright.

"It's their condition," she emphasized. "The woman told me they're not worth much if they have wear on them, but brand new like the ones I have—they're worth plenty. Especially as there are three-hundred of them. She said the fact they were from an original horde made them slightly more valuable and imbued them with an aura of history and heritage. I suppose I can see her point....If I decide to sell, she advised placing them in auctions just ten or twelve coins at a time so as not to flood the market....Mr. Breton, I've saved the best for last. It's the story behind the horde."

"Go ahead!" Guiscard gasped. "I can't wait to hear!"

"You know how I opened five rolls and left the sixth alone?"

"Yes."

"When I opened the sixth roll, there was a note inside. It was handwritten by my great-great-grand-father. He was the one

who put the coins in the piano."

"What was his name? What did the note say?"

"Well, his name was Geoffrey Grey and he lived in Prince Edward Island which explains the coins themselves...."

"The note, what did it say, Ms. Smithfield?"

"Here, I'll read it," Abbey said:

"Those of you that are to come are gonna find these here coins. It could be in a hundred years or maybe even two-hundred. There's the romance of it. Long after I'm gone someone's gonna find these here coins and marvel at 'em and maybe get a lot of money for 'em. Obviously it's you cuz you're readin' these here words."

"Don't ever sell the piano but the coins are yours ;o do whatever you want with. All of 'em's new cuz I got 'em myself at the bank. They call the piano a heirloom, and the coins'd be too. 'N they're for you, whoever you may be."

" ' I know you'd be one o' mine, and I only done it bo give a money surprise to one o' my kin and tuh reach out from after death and touch 'em."

"God bless."

"Then it's signed 'Geoffrey Grey'," said Abbey with tears in her eyes. "And dated June of 1879....So, what do you think, Mr. Breton? Isn't that some story?"

"It sure is, Ms. Smithfield. What are you going to do with the coins?"

"I'm going to keep ten of the very best and sell the rest. I'll give some of the proceeds to you. And the rest of the money is going to go to a not-so-well brother in Victoria. He has three children and I know the family is struggling financially. In fact, the one son plays the piano and his mom says he's pretty good."

"What a story!" exclaimed Guiscard. "What a story!"



A Coin Fit for a Queen

By Kenneth Bressett

Milestone Coins: A Pageant of the World's Most Significant and Popular Money (Whitman Publishing)

If a contest were held to choose the world's most popular coin, the winner might well be the famous Maria Theresa taler of Austria. This coin has the unique distinction of having been used as money throughout the world for the past 200 years. The reason for this popularity is that these coins contain a full weight of silver that has never been lessened or altered in any way. Neither the size, nor the design, nor the date has been changed since these coins were first made in 1780. They hold a record that is matched by few other coins in history.

Because of the longevity and popularity of this coin it is in constant demand by collectors all over the world. Its beauty appeals to many. Others are fascinated by the lovely Austrian coat of arms, and the 1780 date that still appears on the reverse. In one survey of collector interest, the Maria Theresa taler was voted as one of the world's most beautiful coins. While that title may be debated, it is undisputed that the design is realistic, well balanced, and attractive.

The portrait of Empress Maria There-

sa shows her in the year of her death: a moment that has been frozen in time as a tribute to this great woman. Her full title around the border proclaims that she was Empress of the Holy Roman Empire, Queen of Hungary and Bohemia, Archduchess of Austria, Duchess of Burgundy, and Countess of Tyrol. She was truly royal, and one of the greatest women in history.

Maria Theresa was a

France.

In the past these large coins were used as money in various countries that did not have their own mints. Traders who recognized the design would not allow any alterations or substitutes. Thus, the coins have come down to us unchanged since 1780. Over the years these pieces have been made intermittently at many world mints, but since 1860 coinage has been restricted to Austria, where they were originally minted.

Each of these coins contains a little more than 28 grams of .833 fine silver. They are slightly larger than U.S. silver dollars and, like them, contain more than three-quarters of an ounce of pure silver. The edge has a special design with lettering that is used only on these coins.

Beautiful, well-made specimens of the Maria Theresa taler have been made throughout the past 50 years. Much older pieces are apt to be not as well struck. Uncirculated coins are generally priced only slightly above silver bullion value. Proof specimens are generally available under \$25.

staunch champion of science and medical research, and instituted many reforms aimed at making life more endurable for the poor. Her friendships with Madame Pompadour and Catherine the Great did much to enhance the role of women in 18th-century Europe. She was the mother of 16 children, many nearly as famous as she—one daughter, Marie Antoinette, married King Louis XVI of



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The Liberty Cap and Liberty Pole: Symbols of Liberty and Freedom

By Christopher R. McDowell

The liberty cap atop a pole is a familiar image to numismatists, but few know its deep history and meaning. This image first appeared on American coins at the end of the Revolutionary War. Under the Articles of Confederation both the states and the federal government were authorized to mint coins. Connecticut Copper coins from 1785-1788 were the first official state coins to use the image of a liberty cap atop a liberty pole. These coins feature an image on the reverse of Liberty holding a liberty pole with a liberty cap on top. A similar image appears on 1787 Nova Eborac coins from New York, and Talbot, Allum & Lee Cents from 1794-1795. Although Vermont was outside the Confederation, it should be noted that it minted coins from 1786-1788 with an image on the reverse that also depicted a liberty pole and cap. Soon thereafter, the image of a liberty cap atop a liberty pole became common on American coins, including Half Cents, 1793-1797; Large Cents, 1793-1796; and Liberty Seated coins, 1837-1891, to name a few. Other coins simply depict liberty wearing a liberty cap, these coins include the Barber coins, 1892-1916; and the Morgan Dollar, 1878-1921.

Currently, no United States coin uses the symbol of the liberty cap and liberty pole. As U.S. coins have shifted from allegorical imag-

es of Liberty to images honoring historical figures such as Lincoln, Franklin, and Washington, Americans forgot the symbolic meaning of the liberty cap and liberty pole, and the current generation of Americans is unaware of the meaning of these symbols.

The cap is brimless, limp, and conical, and fits snugly around the head. The proper name is the "Phrygian cap," after Phrygia, a kingdom that dominated western and central Asia Minor around 800 B.C. People wore the Phrygian cap, not as a symbol of liberty, but as a simple piece of headgear. Many of these people were later conquered by the Romans and enslaved.

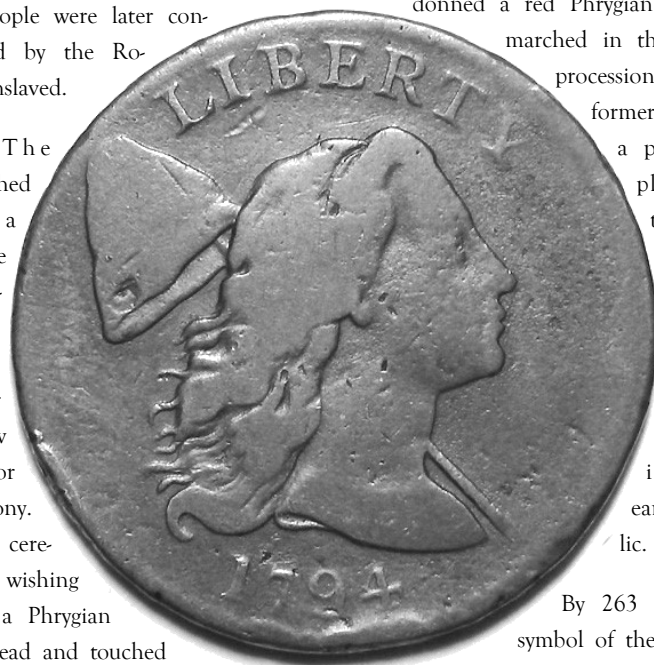
The Phrygian cap morphed from a simple hat to a symbol of liberty due to a Roman ceremony for freeing slaves. In early Rome, a slave could be freed either through a civil law proceeding, a will, or an informal ceremony. During the informal ceremony, a slave holder wishing to free a slave placed a Phrygian cap on the slave's head and touched the slave with a rod. Historians debate the origin of placing a Phrygian cap on the head of a slave as a symbol of freedom. Some believe that

the cap symbolized an egg because of its shape and therefore also symbolized the rebirth of the slave. Others believe the cap covered the shaved head of the former slave while his hair grew back, as a shaved head was generally associated with criminals and slaves. More likely, the cap symbolized the slave's return to his roots. Before the slave's people were captured, they wore the cap. Now free, the slave was again able to wear the headgear of his ancestors.

Regardless of why a slave was presented with a Phrygian cap when freed, it is clear that during the early Republic slaves freed through informal ceremonies were customarily presented with a Phrygian cap. Over time, slaves freed by a slaveholder's will also

donned a red Phrygian cap and marched in the funeral procession of their former master as a public display of their freedom. Thus, the cap came to symbolize liberty in the early Republic.

By 263 B.C., the symbol of the Phrygian cap was widely associated with liberty. When Saturninus took Rome in that year, he placed a Phrygian cap on the end of his

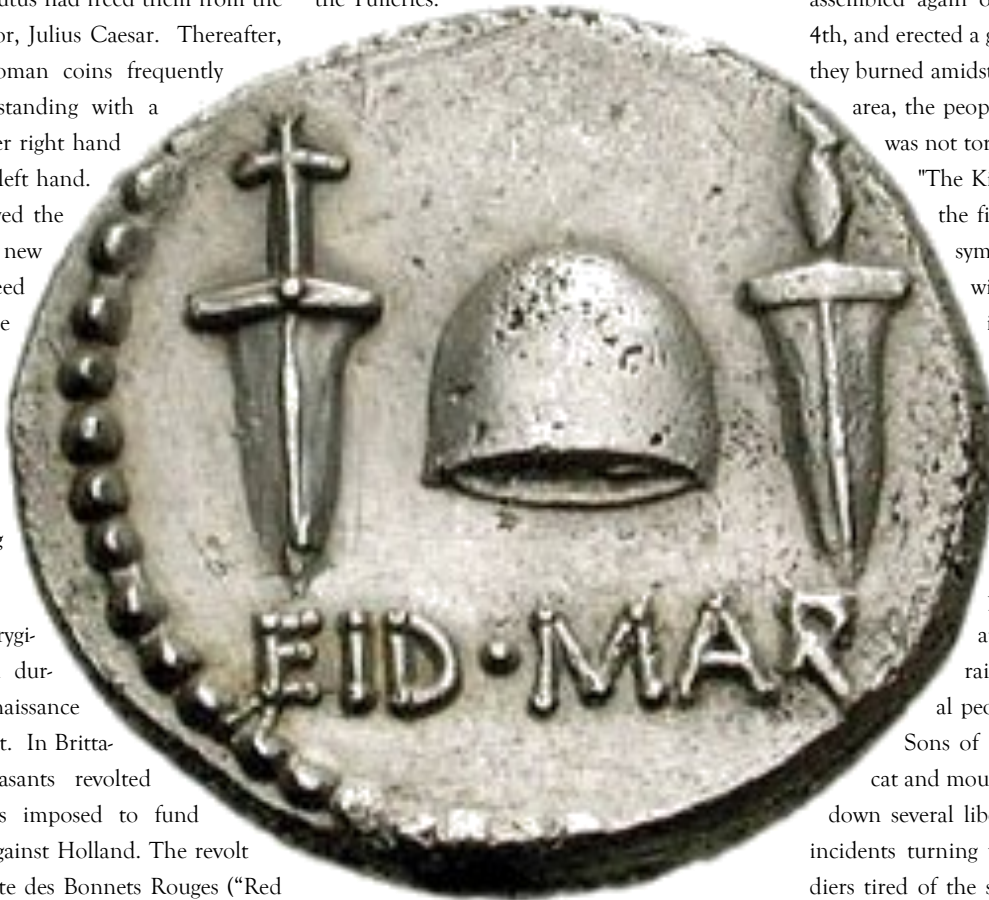


spear and hoisted it in the air as an indication of his promise to free all slaves who joined his forces. The most famous use of the Phrygian cap on a coin came in 44 B.C., when Brutus minted a coin in Asia Minor with the image of the cap between two daggers. This coin was intended, in part, as propaganda to express to the people that Brutus had freed them from the yoke of the dictator, Julius Caesar. Thereafter, the reverse of Roman coins frequently depicted Liberty standing with a Phrygian cap in her right hand and a staff in her left hand. Often, this conveyed the message that the new emperor had freed the people from the oppression of his predecessor. As with many things, the symbol of the Phrygian cap was mostly lost during the Dark Ages.

The Phrygian cap reemerged during the late Renaissance and Enlightenment. In Brittany in 1675, peasants revolted against high taxes imposed to fund Louis XIV's war against Holland. The revolt is known as *Revolte des Bonnets Rouges* ("Red Caps' Revolt") because of the red caps worn by the peasants of the region. The revolt was ruthlessly put down ~ bell-towers of the towns that participated were destroyed and the leaders of the revolt were executed. Consequently, the red cap came to symbolize opposition to taxation. The Sons of Liberty may have adopted the red cap as their symbol around 1765 for this reason. After all, initially, the Sons of Liberty were focused more on opposition to taxation than opposition to the monarchy.

Unlike the people of Brittany, who wore the cap as a normal part of their everyday lives, the Sons of Liberty wore the red cap as a symbol. The French claim the liberty cap as their own special revolutionary symbol. However, Americans first popularized in modern times the liberty cap as a symbol of anti-taxation and, eventually, liberty. The French did contribute

to the history of the cap, as they took the wearing of liberty caps to an extreme during the French Revolution. Indeed, the people of Brittany had their revenge against Louis XIV's grandson when on June 20, 1792, Louis XVI was obliged to don a Phrygian cap and drink to the health of the people when a mob stormed the Tuileries.



While the history of the Phrygian cap as a symbol of liberty is relatively easy to trace, the history of the liberty pole is a little more obscure. As stated earlier, the coins of Rome often depicted Liberty holding a pole and the emancipation ceremony included a rod. However, the Phrygian cap was rarely, if ever, depicted on top of a staff, rod, or pole. Indeed, on Brutus' coin, the cap is depicted with two daggers and not on a pole. Moreover, the term, "liberty pole" is generally unknown in the literature of freedom until the early days of the American Revolution when it suddenly burst onto the scene in the late 1760s in New York City during the Battle of Golden Hill.

The Battle of Golden Hill took place in New York City from January 13 to 19, 1770, some six weeks before the Boston

Massacre. In order to fully understand the Battle of Golden Hill, one must go back to May 20, 1766, when news first reached New York City of the repeal of the Stamp Act. Upon hearing the news, the people gathered to demonstrate their excitement and to show their loyalty and gratitude to the King. The next month, the people assembled again on the King's birthday, June 4th, and erected a great pole in his honor, which they burned amidst a 25 gun salute. In a nearby area, the people raised another pole, which was not torched, bearing the inscription, "The King, Pitt, and Liberty." Thus, the first liberty pole was born as a symbol of freedom from taxation without representation and was ironically raised to honor King George III's benevolence.

As the situation between the King and his subjects worsened, British soldiers cut down the liberty pole. The next day, soldiers attacked a group attempting to raise a new pole, injuring several people. Over the next year, the Sons of Liberty and soldiers played a cat and mouse game of raising and cutting down several liberty poles, with many of the incidents turning violent. Eventually, the soldiers tired of the sport and let the liberty pole stand unmolested for three years. At last, on January 13, 1770, the soldiers emerged from their barracks with a renewed vigor to destroy the pole. The Sons of Liberty were equally determined to keep the now iron-reinforced liberty pole from being destroyed. The British plan was to blow the pole up (or down) with gun powder. After three days of fighting, the soldiers leveled the pole and cut it to pieces, which they piled in front of the headquarters of the Sons of Liberty.

Angered by this insult, the Sons of Liberty fought a two day conflict with the soldiers during which several lives were lost. Since the skirmishes took place in the area known as Golden Hill, the conflict became known as the "Battle of Golden Hill." It was here that the first blood of the coming conflict was shed.

While these events are not common knowledge today, our forefathers were well aware of the Battle of Golden Hill and the liberty pole. In fact, virtually every city in America had a liberty pole. In Boston, after the British cut down the liberty tree, it was replaced with a liberty pole and a cap was placed on top of the pole to notify members of secret meetings. In the town of Holmes Hole, near Boston, the people erected an especially tall, thick liberty pole. So tall, in fact, that the pole could be seen by ships at sea. This pole caught the eye of the captain of the British ship Unicorn in 1778 after the mast of his ship was damaged. The captain told the city leaders that if they did not agree to sell him the liberty pole, he would consider it an act of rebellion and would order his guns to fire upon the town. The city leaders agreed to sell the pole and the captain stated he would return the next day with a crew to retrieve it. Legend has it that during the night several small girls borrowed their fathers' augers and drilled holes in the pole and packed it with gunpowder. Using the hem of their petticoats for wadding, they lit a fuse and blew the liberty pole to pieces. Whether or not the legend of the little girls is true, the pole was destroyed in order to prevent the British from using it. Encounters such as these were not uncommon during the Revolutionary War, and these stories were widely known to the soldiers of Washington's Army.

Accordingly, when American coin engravers looked for an image to symbolize liberty and freedom, they adopted the liberty pole and liberty cap – two images that had significant meaning to the people of post-colonial America. Just as the slaves of Ancient Rome donned red caps to demonstrate their

had significant meaning to the people of post-colonial America. Just as the slaves of Ancient Rome donned red caps to demonstrate their freedom, the new nation now declared to the world that it was free through these images engraved on its coins.

Although most Americans enjoyed their



freedom from the King, a significant portion of the American population was still not free. These people too yearned to place the Phrygian cap on their head and experience the joys of liberty. During the course of the 19th century, the liberty cap came to also symbolized the slaves' struggle for freedom and, as such, abolitionists adopted the liberty cap as a symbol.

The controversial nature of the new symbolism of the liberty cap is demonstrated by an incident that took place in 1855. In that year, plans were underway for the new dome of the nation's Capitol. The Capitol dome was to

be topped by the Statute of Freedom. The original plans called for the Statute of Freedom to wear a Phrygian cap. Secretary of War, Jefferson Davis, objected to the headgear: "history renders it inappropriate to a people who were born free and would not be enslaved," he stated. As a result, the design was changed.


Another controversial use of the liberty cap and pole was by the woman's suffrage movement. On July 27, 1913, Sylvia Pankhurst delivered a "defiant speech" and led a "riotous crowd toward Downing Street" in London. According to the story that appeared in the *New York Times* the next day, "[a]t the head of the procession men and women carried sticks flying the suffragette flag, surmounted by a large red liberty cap." Thus, even into the early 20th century, the red cap of liberty was widely understood as a symbol of freedom from oppression. However, the morphing of the image from a universally popular image of Liberty to a symbol for the struggle for freedom of Southern slaves and women's struggle for equality caused a decrease in the public's overall acceptance and use of the image. Today, the liberty cap and liberty pole are rarely seen.

Coin collectors often like to hold coins in their hands and wonder who else may have held them and what they might have purchased with the coins. However, the liberty cap and liberty pole remind us that the images on a coin have a history all their own. Next time you hold an early American coin, examine its images and ask yourself what do the symbols mean to both you and the first person who held the coin.

Gene Hessler, a member of the Cincinnati Numismatic Association,

Hey!
Mister Horn Blower


Memoirs of a
Life in Music and Numismatics



Gene Hessler

Foreword by Zane L. Miller,
Charles Phelps Taft Professor of History Emeritus, University of Cincinnati

A portrait of Dr. R. Wayne Moore, President of the American Society of Hematology. He is an older man with a white beard and glasses, wearing a dark suit, white shirt, and red tie. He is sitting at a table with his arms crossed over a stack of several books. The background is a textured, brownish-gold wall.



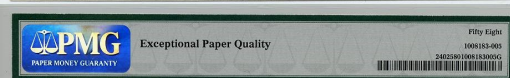
If you are unable to attend the Central States Numismatic Association convention, orders for books can also be sent to Gene. As published in the Volume 50, Issue 2556, March 23rd, 2009 issue of Coin World (page 78), orders for the book can be sent to Box 31144, Cincinnati, Ohio 45231 or to Gene's email address, engraversline@aol.com

At the 2010 FUN Convention,
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Featured Educational Programs at the CSNS Convention in Cincinnati, Ohio (April 28th—May 3rd)

Reprinted from *The Cincinnati Numismatist*, official publication of the Cincinnati Numismatic Association, host club of the upcoming CSNS convention

Editor's Note: PDF versions of the registration forms for the following programs are available on the Cincinnati Numismatic Association's website, www.cincycoins.org.



Tuesday, April 28

William Conroy, former senior grader for NGC, will present a three-hour seminar on the topic:

"Diagnosing Characteristics of Key Date Altered and Counterfeit Coins." Seminar hours are 9:00 AM to Noon in Room 261 of the Duke Energy Center in downtown Cincinnati, Ohio. Following Mr. Conroy's Seminar, Glen Jorde, Senior Grader for PMG, will present a three-hour seminar on the topic: "Issues Related To the Aesthet-



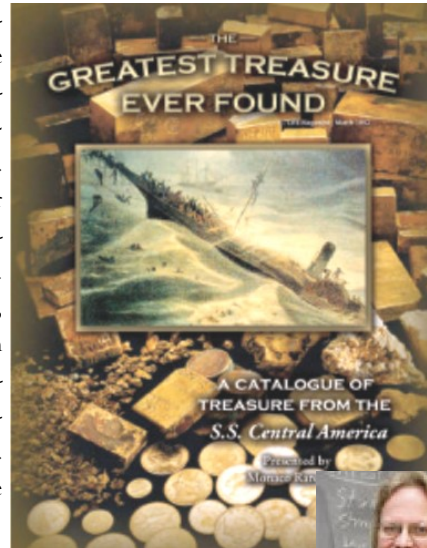
ic and Appearance Enhancement of Collectible Paper Money." This seminar's hours are 1 PM to 4 PM, also in Room 261. There is no charge for these seminars. Pre-registration is required. Contact Ray Lockwood, Central States Education Director at 765-664-6520 or email: sunray-ofmarion@aol.com. Registration deadline is April 20th 2009.

Saturday and Sunday, May 2 & 3

The American Numismatic Association will conduct its popular "Coins in the Classroom: Seminar for Teachers." Hours for each seminar day are 9 AM to 5 PM in Room 238 of the Duke Energy Center in downtown Cincinnati, Ohio. All teachers are encouraged to get registration forms online at the ANA website: www.money.org, or the CSNS website: www.centralstates.info. Teachers will gain practical knowledge and a wealth of free supplies for classroom use.

Sunday, May 3

Central States is proud to present, Robert Evans, Chief Scientist for the S.S. Central America Discovery and Recovery Project. Mr. Evans will spend the day, 9 AM to 3 PM, in Room 236 of the Duke Energy Center in downtown Cincinnati, Ohio, discussing and showing all aspects of the history, discovery, recovery, and restoration of the precious artifacts from the S.S. Central America. Registration forms are available from

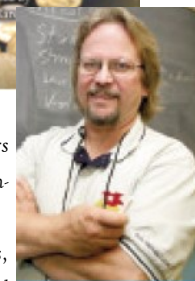


Ray Lockwood, CSNS Education Director, at 765-664-6520 or email: sunray-ofmarion@aol.com. The nominal registration fee is \$10 for CSNS members and \$20 for non-members.

Editor's Note: Also at the convention, see the "Billion Dollar Exhibit" at the Bureau of Engraving and Printing's bourse floor display. It "features more than one billion of rare and antique currency including sheets of \$100,000 Currency Treasury Bonds, and Gold Notes, and Silver Certificates. Also, the Bureau will have on display an exhibit featuring Series 1942-C, 12 Subject \$1,000 and \$10,000 San Francisco Face Plates" (CSNS flyer). The Bureau will also have a working antique Spider Press on display. The exhibits will be available to the public on Thursday, April 30 (1 PM to 6 PM), Friday,

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day, May 1 (10 AM to 6 PM), and Saturday, May 2 (10 AM to 5 PM).

From Your Editor

By Katie Heinrich

The upcoming WIN meeting will be held at the Central States Numismatic Society's annual convention. This year, the convention will be held in my hometown, Cincinnati, Ohio. It will be a great show, with a multitude of dealers and many wonderful educational programs. My own local club is to be the host club for the convention, and we hope to help the convention be a great success. If you plan to attend the convention, I suggest staying in Cincinnati on Sunday, even though the official show is



over. On Sunday, Central States will be hosting a wonderful Seminar given by Robert Evans on the S.S. Central America and the recovery of its treasures. Evans was the Chief Scientist on the project, and his presentation should prove to be

fascinating. Cincinnati is also a prime city to have the convention in. The convention center is newly renovated, the surrounding hotels are top-notch, and quality restaurants of all

types and price levels can be found in the surrounding area.

At this WIN meeting, I am scheduled to be the speaker. I will be speaking on my experiences as both a Young Numismatist and a female in the numismatic world. I hope to give some insight into the typically male-dominated hobby and encourage girls and women who are just starting out in numismatics.

Katie,

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"WINNING" in Portland

Photos by John and Nancy Wilson

WIN's new President, Lorraine Weiss, presided over her first full WIN meeting at the American Numismatic Association's annual Spring convention in Portland, Oregon (right). Weiss has spoken at WIN meetings on more than one occasion in the past, and her speaking skills come in handy as President. Thank you to Lorraine for embracing this position.



There was a good turnout for the meeting. The members who attended the ANA show in Portland were present at the meeting. Those in attendance included recent Past President Prue Fitts (left).

The next WIN meeting will be held at the Central States Numismatic Society's annual convention in Cincinnati, Ohio.

At every WIN meeting, an educational presentation is included in the agenda. Either the subject matter being discussed relates to women, or the presenter is a woman herself. Sometimes, both apply. But this meeting, the speaker was Walt Ostromecki, an ANA Governor. Ostromecki spoke on *"Some of the Women Behind Our Money – And Hobby Collectibles."* The talk was wonderful, as Walt's always are (right).

Ostromecki is again running for the ANA Board of Governors this year, as an incumbent, and, as an active member of WIN, he has the club's official support.



Have You Ever Seen A Wooden Medal?

By Emmett Ey

If you collect medals, you have seen them in all shapes and sizes and even compositions. But have you ever seen a Wooden Medal? I was lucky enough to find 3 in their original

boxes the day after the March 20th CNA club meeting. Wooden medals were first introduced for the 1876 Centennial Exposition held in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. Their next appearance was for the Columbian Exposition held in Chicago in 1893. These 3 are from that Exposition. They picture the Administration Building, the Manufacturers Building, and Machinery Hall. A common reverse die was used for each one. They are made of pressed walnut and are 3 3/8 inches in diameter and 3/8 inches thick. The boxes were made by T.W & C.B Sheridan

Co. of New York & Chicago. Wooden Medals are relatively scarce due to their inherent composition and are frequently found heavily cracked and warped. These 3 are close to Mint condition with minor cracking



WIN Scholarship Award

If you would like to apply for WIN'S scholarship award to the ANA summer conference, now is the time! Deadline for applications is December 15th.

You must be a WIN member for at least one year before applying, and must be an active member by doing one of the following:

- Writing articles for Winning Ways
- Serving on the board of directors
- Presenting a program at a WIN meeting
- Selling 50/50 tickets at a major show
- Signing up at least 4 new members within the past couple of years.

If you would like to apply you need to:

- Write a full page (200-250 word) essay including why you want to attend the conference, and your numismatic background.
- Send a signed and dated disclaimer that you will not hold WIN responsible for loss or injury while attending or traveling to or from the conference.
- Send your dues for the scholarship year, if not already paid. (All dues must be received by December 15th.)
- Agree to provide Winning Ways a report on your experience at the summer seminar (reasonable length suggested) if you receive a scholarship from WIN.

(Note: You are not eligible for this scholarship if you have won it in the past 5 years.)

WIN pays tuition for present ANA member, along with dormitory room and board for a double occupancy room.

The winning name will be drawn at the WIN meeting in conjunction with the January FUN show. You do not need to be present to win.

We look forward to receiving your application soon!!

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November 1	January Issue

Display rates (per issue):

For Camera Ready Copy

1/8 Page (2 3/8" x 3 3/8")	\$50.00
1/4 Page (4 3/4" X 3 3/8")	\$75.00
1/2 Page (7" X 4 3/4")	\$100.00
Full Page (7" X 9 1/2")	\$150.00
Reduced Business Card	\$25.00

Payment in full must accompany ad.

10 % discount on a 1 year ad contract.

Distribution Locations

FUN
Central States
Summer ANA
Regional Shows